

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 have been canceled, and claims 12-35 have been added. Entry of the amendment is respectfully requested.

Anticipation Rejections

Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Merriman US 2,952,579. Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Adiletta US 5,228,891.

In response, Applicants note that claim 10 directed to a reinforcement element has been canceled, and no claims have been added directed to a reinforcement element.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that these rejections have been overcome, and withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

Obviousness Rejections

Claims 1, 7-9 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fujita et al. W003/048072 (translation provided by US 7,138,168) in view of Merriman US 2,952,579. Claims 2-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fujita et al. W003/048072 (translation provided by US 7,138,168) and US 2,952,579 as applied in claim 1 above and further in view of Adiletta US 5,228,891.

Applicants submit that the present invention is not obvious over the cited art combinations, and requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw these rejections in view of the following remarks.

1 - Modifications and patentability of independent claim 12

1.1. Claim 12 corresponds to original claim 1 where the feature "embedded in said binding agent" has been moved to qualify more precisely the active portion of the reinforcement element, rather than the reinforcement element itself.

Claim 12 has also been modified to incorporate the features of canceled claim 11 relative to the materials used for the binding agent and the filtration elements.

In addition, the material of the active portion and the technical effect thus obtained has been added, according to the corresponding page 9, lines 13 to 15, of the specification.

Finally, claim 12 has been modified to recite the features of a filtration element as disclosed on pages 5 and 6 of the specification. This is to clarify the definition of a filtration element according to the present application. The first and second faces are now qualified as lateral.

1.2. Due to these modifications in the independent claim, dependent claims 5, 6 and 11 of the previous set of claims have been cancelled. The other dependent claims are unchanged but are presented in new claims dependent directly or indirectly on claim 12.

1.3 Claim 12 is patentable based on at least the following arguments.

i) The fabric adhesive-carrier 11 disclosed in Merriman is not made of a metal but of glass fiber threads 12. This carrier is not capable of "constituting preferred axis for propagation of thermal fluxes within a joint", contrary to the mesh-like reinforcing element of the claimed structure, as stated on page 9 of the specification.

ii) The arrangement made of a filter 57 maintained between two support screen 59 disclosed in Adiletta is located between a set of inlet cells and a set of discharge cells. This particular location corresponds to what is called a filtration wall 26 in the present patent application. But, in the meaning of the present patent application, a filtration element is an assembly of inlet and outlet conduits. Thus, Adiletta fails to disclose a reinforcement means between two filtration elements.

iii) Moreover, Adiletta fails to disclose that the support screen 59 is embedded into a binding agent for forming a joint. The skilled person when considering Adiletta would have receive no incentive to embed the support screen into a binding agent for forming a joint connecting two filtration elements.

Thus, independent claim 12 is not obvious relative to Merriman in view of Adiletta.

2 - Modifications and patentability of independent claim 19

1.1. Claim 19 corresponds to original claim 1 where the feature "embedded in said binding agent" has been moved to qualify more precisely the active portion of the reinforcement element, rather than the reinforcement element itself.

Claim 19 incorporates the features of canceled claim 11 relative to the materials used for the binding agent and the filtration elements.

Claims 19 also incorporates the features of canceled claim 7 about the fact that the joint extends over two adjacent lateral faces of the same filtration element.

Finally, claim 19 recites the features of a filtration element as disclosed on pages 5 and 6 of the specification. This is to clarify the definition of a filtration element according to the present application. The first and second faces are now qualified as lateral.

2.2. Due to these modifications in the independent claim, dependant claims 7 and 11 have been cancelled. The other dependent claims are unchanged but are presented in new claims dependent directly or indirectly on claim 19.

2.3 In addition to the arguments ii) and iii) stated in point 1.3. above, neither Adiletta nor Merriman discloses reinforcement means extending in different planes in order its active portions be opposite to adjacent lateral faces of the same filtration element. In the arrangements according to these two prior art documents, the means considered by the Examiner as reinforcement means are in face laying in parallel planes. Nothing in these prior art documents teaches the skilled person to cover several adjacent faces, in particular perpendicular faces, of the filtration element with such a reinforcement means.

Thus, the amended independent claim 19 is not obvious relative to Merriman in combination with Adiletta.

3 - Modifications and patentability of independent claim 27

3.1. Claim 27 corresponds to original claim 1 where the feature "embedded in said binding agent" has been moved to qualify more precisely the active portion of the reinforcement element, rather than the reinforcement element itself.

Claim 27 incorporates the features of canceled claim 11 relative to the materials used for the binding agent and the filtration elements.

Claim 27 recites the result that the claimed structure can withstand several regeneration phases according to page 13 lines 20 to 23 of the specification.

Finally, claim 27 recites the features of a filtration element as disclosed on pages 5 and 6 of the specification. This is to clarify the definition of a filtration element according to the present application. The first and second faces are now qualified as lateral.

2.2. Due to these modifications in the independent claim, dependant claim 11 has been cancelled. The other dependent claims are unchanged but are presented in new claims dependent directly or indirectly on claim 27.

2.3. In addition to the arguments i) and ii) stated in point 1.3. above, neither the arrangement disclosed in Adiletta nor the one disclosed in Merriman is capable of withstanding successive regeneration phases.

Thus, independent claim 27 is not obvious relative to Merriman in combination with Adiletta.

4. Finally, in point 9 of the Office Action, the Examiner states that it is obvious to modify the arrangements disclosed in Adiletta or Merriman in order to obtain the claimed invention.

Applicants consider that this argument is the mere opinion of the Examiner without substantive facts. It is, in addition, made "a posteriori", without taking into account the technical field and the technical problem to be solved by the invention.

Thus, Applicants submit that the present invention is not obvious over the cited art combinations, and withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.114(c)
U.S. Application No.: 10/596,656

Attorney Docket No.: Q95593

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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